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SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [HR](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: ADRIATIC CHARTER MINISTERIAL REAFFIRMS REGIONAL COOPERATION

SUMMARY and COMMENT

[11.](#) (SBU) Adriatic Charter Defense Ministers endorsed an ambitious agenda of 21 joint activities for 2005 that begins to bring much-needed substance to the Adriatic Charter dialogue. Although the planned August 2005 deployment of an A3 medical team to Afghanistan remains the most visible "deliverable" of the A3, in their joint statement, the Defense Ministers opened the door to enhancing joint counter-terrorism activities. All participants endorsed expanding regional cooperative defense activities, including Partnership for Peace, to Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina once those two countries had fulfilled current conditions, i.e. full cooperation with the ICTY. Interestingly, in Joint Statement discussions, Macedonia proposed an executive level steering group to work on exchanging information that would enhance co-operation on measures and tools for counter-proliferation. Albania's Minister of Defense specifically resisted establishing the Executive Steering group or even a working group on the subject. The final version of paragraph 6 of the Joint Statement, while still calling for increased cooperation, is a watered down version of the Macedonian-proposed and Croatian-supported proposal. END SUMMARY and COMMENT.

[12.](#) (SBU) Ministers of Defense from Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia plus U.S. Department of Defense and Embassy Zagreb representatives were joined by Ministers of Defense from Serbia and Montenegro (SaM) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) on January 25 for a U.S.-Adriatic Charter (A3) Defense Ministerial focused on approving an aggressive agenda of joint activities for 2005. Senior Defense Ministry officials from Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Slovenia also participated in the dialogue, joined by the Romanian Ambassador to Croatia and a NATO representative.

[13.](#) (SBU) Croatian Defense Minister Berislav Roncevic opened the meeting by noting the positive evolution of the A3 from a forum for dialogue to a forum for joint activity. Roncevic stated that the partners had demonstrated the "seriousness of the A3 in pursuing a joint path to NATO." He noted that the extensive, multi-level A3 dialogue of 2004 was being supplemented with an aggressive schedule of joint activities in 2005, highlighted by the planned August deployment of a joint medical team to Afghanistan. Roncevic welcomed the participation of SaM and BiH Defense Ministers in the A3 dialogue and said all countries represented were welcome to observe A3 activities. Croatian Parliament Deputy Speaker Luka Bebic told the participants that NATO's open door policy encourages A3 members to implement the necessary reforms to become members.

[14.](#) (SBU) Albanian Defense Minister Pandeli Majko welcomed U.S. support for the A3 and outlined the status and priorities for Albania's defense conversion process. Majko said that force reduction and professionalization were underway, civilian control over the military was being consolidated, and chemical weapons stocks were being destroyed. Albania currently deploys five percent of its military in peacekeeping operations to Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Current priorities were completing force restructuring and professionalization, modernizing equipment, and adapting logistics capacities to NATO systems. Noting the importance of a NATO presence to stability in Kosovo and the region, Majko said the GoA hoped to expand the Partnership for Peace (PfP) to all Southeast Europe to promote further reforms and political stability.

[15.](#) (SBU) Macedonian Defense Minister Jovan Manasievski said that the A3 shows the members' political commitment to regional cooperation. Touching a theme that every other speaker echoed, Manasievski said that the GoM would welcome SaM and BiH participation in PfP "as soon as possible." Manasievski said that aside from procuring equipment for NATO-designated units, the GoM's other priority was to achieve fully proportionate minority representation in the military by 2007.

¶6. (SBU) The United States was represented by Mr. Alan Van Egmond, Director of Balkans and Eurasia Programs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The full text of his comments is available at
. These comments highlighted several regional issues that will be important for 2005 including Defense Reform, the Proliferation Security

Initiative, Kosovo, Indicted War Criminals, as well as contributions to regional and international security.

¶7. (SBU) Other speakers largely stuck to well-established positions. In forward-leaning remarks, Turkey's Representative stated unambiguously that the next NATO summit should be an "expansion summit" at which Croatia, Macedonia and Albania should all be issued membership invitations. Serbia and Montenegro Defense Minister Davinic stressed progress in defense reforms and depoliticization of the military. However, he admitted that a greater challenge is changing the mind-set of individuals. While SaM would like to be part of PFP, Davinic acknowledged that the main obstacle was "our lack of cooperation with the ICTY." Bosnia and Herzegovina Defense Minister Radovanovic welcomed the expressions of political will to broaden regional defense cooperation and said BiH was a credible candidate for PFP.

¶8. (U) Text of Joint Statement follows:

US-Adriatic Charter
Defence Ministerial
Zagreb, January 25, 2005

Joint Statement

¶1. We, the Ministers of Defence of the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Macedonia, together with a representative from the United States Department of Defence, gathered today in Zagreb for the US-Adriatic Charter Third Ministerial Meeting;

¶2. Building on the Joint Statement adopted at the Partnership Commission Meeting in Brijuni on 12 November 2004, we are:

- re-affirming our commitment to the principles of the Charter;
- confirming our readiness to further enhance co-operation in order to achieve our common goal: the full integration of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia into NATO;
- endorsing the conclusions of the EAPC Ministerial Meeting held on 9 December 2004, in Brussels; and
- continuing our support for NATO's presence in the region.

¶3. We wish to express our gratitude to the United States, to our neighbouring countries in the region, and NATO-EU member countries for their firm support to our common efforts on our way to membership.

¶4. We underscore the achievements related to the full implementation of the Action Plan in the year 2004, and we endorse the Action plan for 2005.

¶5. We confirm our commitment to presenting a combined medical unit for deployment to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force Mission in Afghanistan.

¶6. We reconfirm our will to broaden Adriatic co-operation in the Global War on Terrorism. Following international conventions on the counter-proliferation of WMD, we will enhance the exchange of information on measures to expand co-operation in this area.

¶7. We strongly believe our co-operation is an important instrument for promoting regional security and stability. In this spirit, we confirm our further commitment to supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro in their efforts to join NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme as soon as possible.

¶8. Following the conclusions from the Istanbul Summit, we expect NATO's Foreign Ministers to review the progress made by Albania, Croatia and Macedonia towards full membership in NATO on an individual basis.

¶9. We agree that the next Defence Ministerial will be held in Albania.

For the Republic of Albania
Mr. Pandeli Majko

For the Republic of Croatia
Mr. Berislav Roncevic

For the Republic of Macedonia
Mr. Jovan Manasijevski

For the United States of America
Mr. Alan Van Egmond

END TEXT of Joint Statement

10. (U) OSD Policy Cleared on this message.
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